

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Status of the Claims

In the Office Action mailed December 21, 2004, claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1-8 are allowed. The Examiner is thanked for the allowance of these claims. Claims 9 and 17 are rejected. Claims 10-16 and 18-20 are objected to. Claims 9 and 17 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the outstanding Office Action including the Examiner's remarks and the references cited therein.

The following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action. All the pending claims at issue are believed to be patentable over the cited references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §112

Examiner rejected claims 9-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 9 and 17 have been amended in view of Examiner's comments. Claims 10-16 depend from independent claim 1 and claims 18-20 depend from independent claim 17 and are patentable for at least the same reasons as are claims 9 and 17. In light of the amendment to the claims, Applicant hereby respectfully requests that the rejection to these claims be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is necessary to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at 202-861-1746 in an effort to resolve any matter still outstanding before issuing another action.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036 with reference to our Docket No. 56816.1620.

Respectfully submitted,

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